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MENTAL CULTURE

OR

HINTS

ON THE

CULTIVATION OF THE MIND

ADDRESSED ESPECIALLY TO YOUNG MEN ENGAGED IN COMMERCIAL PURSUITS.

BY

W. DEALBY;

WITH

EXPLANATORY ITALIAN NOTES

BY

JOHN MILLHOUSE

AUTHOR OF THE NEW

English and Italian Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary, del Corso graduato e completo di lingua inglese, ecc., ecc.

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AVVERTIMENTO.

Prima di accingersi a leggere questo libretto, conviene che l'Allievo abbia studiato il *Primo Passo*, e letto almeno dugento pagine degli *Elegant Extracts*.

THE EDITOR.

SOTTO I TORCHI

La terza edizione dei *Dialogues anglais et français*, ed il secondo volume del Nuovo *English and Italian Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary*. — Fra un mese si darà alle stampe la settima edizione della *Grammatica inglese*.

PREFACE.

The present Pamphlet has been written with a design to awaken (1) in commercial young men a desire for self-improvement (2), and to afford (3) some instruction in prosecuting this important and somewhat (4) difficult work.

The writer is aware (5) that books have been written to aid in forming the intellectual character of the student, and the value of these books he is not backward in acknowledging (6); but it will be found that they are more adapted to persons intended for professions, than to those engaged in mercantile occupations.

If any one more capable than himself had undertaken (7) to offer to such, some hints (8) on self-culture, he would gladly (9) have relinquished a task (10) for which he feels but imperfectly qualified. As, however, nothing has been written, as far as he is aware, specifically to assist commercial young men in the work of mental improvement according to (11) their present position in society — and as he is not altogether (12) ignorant of the difficulties which impede their mental progress, by having once had to contend with such difficulties himself, — he has been induced to give them what aid he could in

(1) Risvegliare. — (2) La coltura della mente, il coltivarsi, migliorarsi, perfezionarsi. — (3) Offrire, porgere. — (4) Alquanto. — (5) È consapevole, sa. — (6) Not backward in acknowledging, dispostissimo a riconoscere. — (7) Intrapreso. — (8) Cenni. — (9) Volentieri. — (10) Lavoro. — (11) Accomodato a, secondo. — (12) Affatto, del tutto.

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the following hints. He has been further (1) induced, from his having urged in a former pamphlet the justice and importance of closing business at a reasonable time, thinking that, as some had adopted this system, it might not be unprofitable to give a few directions on the right (2) improvement of leisure hours.

As his remarks are cursorily made, he has sought (3) only to express them in as concise and lucid a manner as possible; and if he need offer any apology for the quotations he has given from other writers, it must be that he deems (4) it always advisable to allow (5) another to speak on the point in question, when that other can do it better than himself (6).

He would only add his sincere desire that what he he has attempted for the benefit of a class of individuals in whose best welfare (7) he shall always feel interested, may not have been attempted in vain.

W. B.

London, January, 1840.

(1) Inoltre. — (2) Giusto, retto, acconcio, giudizioso. — (3) Cercato. — (4) Stima, pensa. — (5) Permettere. — (6) The writer would gratefully acknowledge the assistance he has derived from « Todd's Student's Manual » — an invaluable work, which, though designed principally for regular students, will nevertheless prove * of great service to all » concerned to cultivate their minds, and to be respectable and happy in life. » — (7) Benestare, ben essere, felicità.

* Riuscire, essere.

HINTS

ON THE

CULTIVATION OF THE MIND

It has been justly said of the human mind, that it is the glory of man, and the highest display (1) of the wisdom (2) and power of the Infinite Creator.

It is his spiritual and immortal part; it is that which assimilates him to the moral likeness (3) of his Maker, which gives him a pre-eminence in the scale of sentient existence, and which constitutes him lord of creation. The world (4) was made for him, adorned and beautified for his habitation, and all its rich productions, whether viewed on the out-spread lap (5) of nature, or found secreted beneath (6) the soil on which he treads (7), are designed and adapted to minister both to his use (8) and happiness. It is by that endowment (9) of his nature which we term reason, that he is enabled to render all nature subservient (10) to his good. In this we see the

(1) Manifestazione, mostra, prova. — (2) Saviezza, sapienza. — (3) Somiglianza. — (4) Mondo. — (5) Grembo, faccia, superficie. — (6) Sotto. — (7) Cammina. — (8) Utilità, uso. — (9) Dote, facoltà. — (10) Serviggevole, giovevole, ministrativo.

vast superiority of mind over matter, and to what an illimitable extent the former may be capable of rendering the latter the source or medium of numberless enjoyments. The progress of civilization — the rise of nations — the might and wealth of empires — are only confirmations of this fact. What will not even a few minds accomplish! It is to the mental power of Davy, Watt, and Arkwright, that we are indebted for a thousand conveniences of life; and in the present day, how great are the achievements (1) of mind for raising the social condition of man! But, however (2) superior mind may be to matter in its highest forms, its vigour and power are, in a great measure, attributable to human culture and discipline, without which it is probable that many who have astonished the world by their discoveries in science, would have gone off the stage (3) of life without effecting any work to perpetuate the remembrance of their names.

The human mind is capable of unlimited improvement; no boundary (4) can be given beyond (5) which it shall not advance. Man is a progressive being, and enters upon his existence with all the capabilities of progression. His reason, at first feeble, strengthens (6) and expands with the growth (7) of his physical powers,

(1) Conquisti, acquisti, asseguimenti. — (2) Comechè, per quanto. — (3) Palco, scena, teatro. — (4) Confine, limite. — (5) Al di là di. — (6) Si rinforza. — (7) Accrescimento.

becomes more capable of action and training (1), until, by its right exercise in the acquisition of knowledge, it is constituted a great director, not only of individual actions, but ofttimes of the movements of nations, while it leaves scattered (2) over the earth the manifestos of its power.

The dissimilarity between the fierce barbarian, exulting over the slaughtered (3) victims of the battle-field, and the lofty (4) mind of a Newton, calmly contemplating the celestial courses of the planets, is immensely great; but this dissimilarity is not so much to be attributed to anything inherent in the mind of the one, which is not in the mind of the other, as to the mental discipline and culture which the one has enjoyed, and to which the other is a total stranger.

There is mind enough among the wildest savages of the forest to explore the regions of science and philosophy, but no cultivating hand has directed its growth, or watered it from the fount of knowledge (5). Mind, wherever it is found (6), is treasure: but it may be as treasure hidden, buried (7) under ruins, and wasting away.

The marble hewn (8) from the quarry (9) shows neither its value nor its beauty, till the skilful (10) hand

(1) Educazione, disciplina, studio. — (2) Sparsi, seminati. — (3) Trucidate. — (4) Elevato, sublime. — (5) Scienza. — (6) Ovunque si trovi. — (7) Seppellito. — (8) Tagliato. — (9) Cavo. — (10) Esperta, perita.

of the sculptor has given to it form, and brought to view its purple veins.

These truths may appear so trite as to render the statement of them superfluous, but our familiarity with truths is often the cause of our slight (1) appreciation of them, and since the fact of the superiority of mind over all material systems impels so few to its right cultivation, it cannot be too frequently stated (2) or stated in too impressive a manner. The greater number of young men, it is to be feared, pass through life with a comparative indifference as to correct formation of character and true cultivation of mind, whilst it is painfully cognizable that very many yield themselves (3) to the domination of vain and fashionable amusements, or to the blandishments of a destroying sensuality. Now, whatever may be the views of such respecting the nobility of their mental nature, we cannot hesitate to affirm, if we judge them by their acts, that they are not very correct or elevated. We could ill believe that the proprietor of a landed estate (4) set a high value upon it, if he permitted an exuberance of weeds and brambles (5) to infect it in every part, and allowed the venerable mansion, that was once the pride of some chivalrous lord, to moulder into ruins (6); so in like manner, to permit

(1) Leggiera, poca. — (2) Detto, espresso. — (3) Si danno, s'abbandonano. — (4) Bene stabile, terra. — (5) Male erbe e spine. — (6) Andare in rovina, ridursi in polvere.

the noble structure of the mind to lapse into a feeble and dilapidated state, is an unfailing sign of a wrong estimation of its intrinsic value.

To neglect the culture of the mind is to abuse a gift (1) which worlds could not bestow (2). To be in the possession of reason, is to be in the possession of a treasure that lays its possessor under the greatest obligations of gratitude, and in the most imperative manner bids (3) him esteem and use it aright. Every gift with which Heaven has blessed (4) man, has been bestowed for some definite and noble end (5). He was not made rational to perform (6) irrational acts. The eye, was it not given to see — the ear to hear — and the mind to judge, to reflect, and to reason? If the organ of sight or hearing be defective, we promptly seek (7) a remedy; and if the mind, from inanity or lethargy, be incapable of rightly judging and reasoning concerning subjects which involve the highest interests of man, ought not the means for the rectification of these defects be as promptly sought for (8) and applied?

But are there not to be found sufficient reasons why you should attend to mental culture in the mere advantages you would derive from it? Apart from all other considerations, it can be affirmed to be absolutely im-

(1) Dono, talento. — (2) Dare, regalare. — (3) Comanda. — (4) Favorito (beneficato). — (5) Fine, scopo. — (6) Fare, eseguire. — (7) Cerchiamo. — (8) Ricercati.

portant in the benefit it confers upon those who prosecute it; in the elevation it gives them over the vulgar and illiterate; in the respect which it obtains for them from others, and in the power it affords to act in the various callings (1) of human life. It must be admitted, that he who possesses a mind strengthened and sharpened (2) by an assiduous application to the pursuits of study, takes a higher stand (3) in society, and has a greater influence to exert than the man who has only mental energy enough to go the mechanical round (4) of his daily duty. The former has over the latter many advantages; he feels that he is not out of his element when engaged in conversation with an intelligent individual, on topics which have not an immediate connection with the business of his secular sphere; he shrinks not (5) from grappling (6) with the arguments of an opponent, nor remains passive when his views are assailed with the glossed invectives of a pedant, while the other is obliged to hear all, and bear (7) all, being either unable to distinguish clearly between truth and error, or feèling himself only capable of giving his assent to the one, and of observing silence as to the refutation of the other. He feels in the company of the intellectual a kind of fear, that makes the time to him a time of bondage,

(1) Vocazioni, professioni, arti. — (2) Aguzzato, acuito. — (3) Posto, luogo, rango, grado. — (4) Ronda, giro, cerchio. — (5) Non si arretra. — (6) Venire alle prese, impugnare. — (7) Sopportare.

and the conversation irksome (1) and strange. He feels that he cannot sympathise with it, nor join in it with pleasure and freedom; and with such feelings he waits for (2) an opportunity to make his exit (3) as anxiously as would a fledged (4) captive to escape from its prison-cage.

Such individuals often deplore their mental destitution, the deficiency of their youthful education, and their neglect in not making up (5) in after life for the meagre instruction of the school-house; — they feel their littleness and insignificance as compared with others — they wish they could experience that mental fortitude which results from mental discipline and intellectual culture — they bewail (6) their defects, but the task of remedying them appears so formidable that they fall back (7) from the attempt, and continue, from want of a steady (8) and noble resolution, to endure the penalties of ignorance and to wear (9) its slavish chains.

Now it is to such, as well as to those who have already given some attention to the pursuits of knowledge, that we desire to offer a few hints on the subject of mental improvement, in the hope that they may incite some to this commendable work, and assist others in the prosecution of it.

(1) Nojosa, uggiosa. — (2) Aspetta. — (3) Prendere congedo, andarsene. — (4) Pennuto. — (5) Compensare. — (6) Lamentano, deplorano. — (7) Indietreggiano, s'arretrano. — (8) Ferma, soda, salda. — (9) Portare.

The first step (1), we think, to be taken by commercial young men towards this object is, to rid themselves (2) of the erroneous notion, that it is not necessary for them to know much; that, as commercial individuals, a moderate degree of mental culture will suffice. This notion has entailed upon thousands (3) the miseries of ignorance, and will ever prove injurious while it is suffered to have a lodgment in the head. Apart from what we have already said on the claims that are incumbent upon us to cultivate the mind, arising from its superlative value, and from the pleasures which spring from such cultivation, on which we could largely dwell, it is highly serviceable to us in whatever station of life we are called to occupy. The man with a mind disciplined — a memory retentive — a judgment sound — an understanding acute, must surely possess advantages over him who is destitute of these mental qualities. Whatever may be your trade (4) or calling, the acquisition of knowledge will not unfit (5) you for its duties, but, on the contrary, will the better qualify you for their discharge. « Knowledge is power, » and whether it be possessed in the shop (6) — the counting-house — the forum — the pulpit — or in the senate-house, it is still (7)

(1) Passo. — (2) Spogliarsi, disfarsi. — (3) Ha dato di migliaja di persone in balia a. — (4) Mestiere. — (5) Disabilitare, rendere disadatto. — (6) Bottega, fondaco. — (7) Ancora, tuttora, sempre (*adj.* quiete, cheto).

power, and power of the highest order and most enviable kind. « Nothing can be more erroneous than the idea, that to discipline and expand the mind with general knowledge unfits a man devoted to business for his particular calling. It is a libel on mercantile, agricultural, and mechanical employments to assert that they are furthered (1) by ignorance, and that the less a man knows beyond them the better it is for his business. » The writer from whom the above extract is taken, states that « a gentleman of large wealth, and of most estimable character, informed him that when he first became an apprentice he took lodgings in a boarding-house (2) with eleven other young men. A part of them solicited of the lady who kept the house the favour of studying in her dining-room, a prescribed portion of the evening, and of having the room kept still for that purpose. The others refused to come to this arrangement (3), and while their companions were studying, they were out spending their evenings in theatres and other places of amusement and dissipation. The difference between the characters and prospects of these two classes gradually increased. Every one of those who wasted (4) their evenings in amusement and pleasure, subsequently failed in business, and finally came to nothing; while all those who devoted

(1) Vantaggiati, avanzati, promossi. — (2) Pensione, casa dove si sta a dozzina. — (3) Accomodamento, accordo. — (4) Sciupavano, sprecavano, scialacquavano.

their leisure time to study, succeeded well in business, and, with the exception of one who has since died, they are still living, as distinguished and valuable citizens. »

All persons are daily called upon (1), more or less, to exercise their judgment and reason upon matters relative to themselves, and at times also on things concerning the interests of others; and will not the advantages of a cultivated mind be then materially felt? An intelligent man is so in any occupation; you cannot but (2) discern it. If he be not acquainted (3) with any particular department of business on which he may be solicited to offer a remark, he will display (4) his wisdom either by observing silence or by making some collateral observations which will at least be acceptable, if not particularly useful; while an ignorant individual would probably assume a knowledge of it, and expose himself to be condemned as a fool by so presuming.

The man of knowledge cannot but manifest it. It is a light within him that must shine forth, either in a greater or less degree; and though for a time circumstances may partially eclipse it, you can no more fail in perceiving it than you can the light on the distant rock, though it casts its rays but faintly (5) over the dark expanse.

If, however, commercial young men prize (6) the ben-

(1) Cheste, richieste. — (2) Non potete non. — (3) Pratico, famigliare. — (4) Mostrerà, farà vedere. — (5) Fievolmente. — (6) Pregiano, apprezzano.

efits of mental culture only in proportion as they may augment their secular gain, we confess that their estimate of it must be comparatively low (1), and positively unjust. Such a view of intellectual improvement is mean (2) and contracted, and only confirms the ignorance of those who look at it in this light. Are the relationships which a mercantile individual sustains only those of a mercantile nature? and is his sphere of action bounded by the narrow (3) precincts of his workshop (4) or counting-house? Were he a solitary and independent unit, he might be content with such knowledge as would be sufficient to acquire the means of animal existence; but he forms part of a community, and, from the connexion which subsists between the several parts, corresponding duties are necessarily reqùired to be performed. The good of the whole is made up (5) of the good of the parts — the moral improvement of each member of a community involves the happiness of the whole; but the secular advancement of each does not involve the moral and intellectual elevation of the community itself.

To attend, then, only to what increases your commercial knowledge, or your mercantile profits, is not the way to seek the real good of society at large, nor,

(1) Bassa. — (2) Meschino, mezzano, basso. — (3) Stretti, ristretti. — (4) Lavoratojo, studio d'artigiano, fucina. — (5) È composto, si compone.

to a certain extent, your own good. Besides (1), you have, or may have, the relationships of husband (2) and parent to sustain; to become a co-operator in the great work of moral reformation, and of patriotic benevolence; to connect yourself with associations which call for the full exercise of sound (3) judgment and strong reason; and will you then discover that you have need (4) of no more mental illumination than would enable you to detect (5) an error in the calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence, or to direct the management of your own business? Will you not rather feel (6) the necessity there is of forming a correct habit of thought and investigation, and judicious plans for the acquisition of knowledge, that you may act with confidence and power? It is when an individual is called to occupy such positions in society, that, if he has neglected the cultivation of such habits, memory is most ready to recall to his sorrow a thousand opportunities which he has suffered to pass by unimproved, while conscience, once slumbering (7) but now awake, covers him with shame (8) by her rebukes (9). Let the present time, then, be improved; and « deeply impress upon your minds the vast importance of a good judgment, and the rich and inestimable advantages of right reasoning. »

(1) Inoltre, d'altronde. — (2) Marito, sposo. — (3) Sano, sodo. — (4) Uopo, bisogno. — (5) Scoprire, trovare. — (6) Anzi sentire. — (7) Addormentata. — (8) Vergogna — (9) Riprendimenti, rimordimenti.

A most important element in mental culture is the right and judicious improvement of time. « Take care of the pence, » cries the economist, « the pounds will take care of themselves; » and in a similar spirit would we urge upon you to note the passage of the small subdivisions of your leisure (1). Remember, that « time is ever on the wing; » and when any portion of it has fled (2) unemployed it cannot be recalled — it has fled for ever.

« Time, » says a philosopher, « is my estate. » Alas! how many are the prodigals of this (perhaps their only, or at least) their invaluable possession! You will not try (3) to improve your time, unless you are first impressed with the necessity of doing so.

Though your time for mental cultivation be limited, and perhaps exceedingly contracted, yet it may be well improved, and be the means ultimately of rendering you respectable in the acquisition of knowledge. Because your time is limited, it should no more be permitted to pass away unemployed than food (4) should be rejected because the quantum is not proportioned to your appetite or desire. All in mercantile pursuits have not the same time, but he who has the least may advantageously improve it. Do what you can, and you will, at least, have the consolation of knowing that you are free from the

(1) Ozio, agio, tempo d'ozio. — (2) Fuggito, passato. — (3) Procurare, provarvi. — (4) Cibo.

charge of folly for not doing more. Young men are too apt to look at the daily amount of time they have, rather than what the accumulation of it would be at the end of one or five years. Five minutes a day would amount to above thirty hours in a year, and one hour a day to more than a month in the year. Let such time, then, be diligently employed in the pursuit (1) of knowledge, and the result, at the end of one or five years, will show (2) what the right employment of minutes can do. « He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass, in seven years, a space equal to the circumference of the globe. » It is the doing of something every day that brings out at last the *multum*. » It was a matter of astonishment to all Europe that Luther, amidst all his travels and active labours, could present a very perfect translation of the whole Bible. But a single word explains it all. He had a rigid system of doing something *every day*. ' *Nulla dies*, ' says he in answer to the question how he did it, ' *nulla dies sine versu* (3) ; and this, in a few years, brought him to the close of the whole Bible. »

We have many recorded instances of individuals devoting their spare (4) moments to intellectual pursuits,

(1) Ricerca. — (2) Dimostrerà. — (3) « No day without (a line) a verse » that is, he suffered no day to pass without doing something in the work of translating. — (4) D'avanzo, d'ozio, d'agio, non occupati.

and successfully overcoming the most formidable difficulties, when poverty and secular drudgery (1) seemed combined to crush (2) their aspiring souls (3).

Thomas Simpson, a weaver (4) in very humble circumstances, prosecuted the study of mathematics, during his leisure time, with such diligence and patience, that, in a few years, he was enabled to give the world some treatises on this most important science, and ultimately to obtain the mathematical chair (5) in one of our colleges.

William Hutton, a stocking-weaver (6), experiencing many hardships (7) and privations in his youthful days, rose to the occupation of a respectable bookseller; and, by assiduously employing, amidst all his difficulties, what time he could steal (8) from his daily duties, rendered himself capable of writing several historical works, one of which is a "History of Birmingham," which has maintained a high reputation among the class of productions to which it belongs.

James Ferguson first acquired the elementary principles of natural philosophy while attending his father's sheep (9), and afterwards while in the service of a farmer and a miller (10). This great man was also enabled

(1) Travaglio, fatica da facchino, facchineria, lavoro penoso. — (2) Schiacciare. — (3) Anime, spiriti. — (4) Tessitore. — (5) Cattedra, sedia. — (6) Calzettajo, tessitore di calze. — (7) Affanni, travagli, durezze. — (8) Rubare, involare. — (9) Pecore. — (10) Mugnajo.

to acquire, by himself (1) the art of painting, by which he obtained, for many years, a comfortable subsistence, besides making such advancement in philosophical studies, as to enable him to publish several works as the result of his investigations.

Daniel De Foe, a well-known writer, whose name is familiar to most as the author of « Robinson Crusoe, » was apprenticed to a hosier (2), and afterwards commenced in that trade for himself; but before he had finished his apprenticeship, he had acquired sufficient knowledge to give to the public a political tract.

A book might be filled with the names of those who, though much occupied in commercial duties, have found both time and opportunity for the work of self-improvement; and who, after the lapse of years, have had their names appended to the list of distinguished literary and scientific men. We quote these instances to show what may be done even by those engaged in mercantile occupations; not that all may become authors, nor even attain to that intellectual elevation which those did whose names we have just mentioned, but that all may in some measure rise in intelligence, and become more happy as they advance in years.

The time for self-improvement which many commercial men have had, who have given to the world powerful proofs (3), both of the extent of their knowledge

(1) Da sè. — (2) Calzettajo. — (3) Prove.

and the strength of their intellect, was, as yours may be, very limited; and, if it be asked, how it was that they accomplished what they did, we answer, by diligently using aright what time they had, by seizing upon (1) every opportunity, by plying (2) every energy of their minds with untiring (3) industry to the acquisition of knowledge.

The cry (4) too often heard, « We can do nothing for want (5) of time and opportunity, » will rarely escape the lips (6) of him who has sympathy with truth and love for knowledge; he will look abroad (7) on what has been accomplished by others similarly placed; he will endeavour (8) to catch (9) something of their spirit — to redeem the moments as they speed their rapid course, and perseveringly pursue the work of mental cultivation, until he takes his stand in society above the multitude who bewail (10), their ignorance, but who have not the noble resolution to employ the time they have to deliver themselves from its ignoble bondage.

With many young men their deficiencies in knowledge are not so much attributable to the want of time as to the want of inclination, and, more than all, of active per-

(1) Afferrare, cogliere. — (2) Adoperare, dirigere. — (3) Indefesso, Instancabile. — (4) Grido. — (5) Mancanza. — (6) Labbra. — (7) Fuori, intorno. — (8) Cercare, sforzarsi di. — (9) Carpire, cogliere. — (10) Deplora, lamenta.

severance. Indolence has been, and still is, the secret cause of the adversity which overclouds the path of many. The student sitting under the « academic bower (1) » has been smitten (2) with this leprosy, and lost for ever that moral power which he might otherwise have acquired and exercised to the good of thousands; while others, too, in circumstances less advantageous, have felt its withering (3) influence, utterly (4) preventing the attainment (5) of that knowledge which might have been secured.

Indolence consists in the indulgence of an inactive disposition, leading (6) you continually to delay till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day; or when not leading you to postpone, causing you to perform your work in a manner that leaves it only half-done. When you read or study, the energies of your mind should be concentrated upon the subject, and your attention fixed, as though you were in quest (7) of gold beneath a foreign soil (8). Two persons will read the same book; the one will read with the application of the mind, and remember a great portion of its contents; the other will read with a kind of laxity, and forget them. It is a lamentable circumstance that so many forget what they read,

(1) Pergola, pergolato. — (2) Infettato, avvelenato. — (3) Diseccante, paralizzante. — (4) Affatto, del tutto. — (5) Conseguimento, acquisto. — (6) Conducendo, inducendo. — (7) Cerca, ricerca. — (8) Suolo, terreno, terra.

and appear to have little profited from what they have done towards improving their intellectual powers. Such may complain of their memories — the early deficiencies in their mental training — the obtuseness of their minds; but the chief ground (1) of complaint will in general be found to lie (2) in the lurking indolence which they suffer to infest them when applying themselves to the acquisition of knowledge. You do not easily forget *that*, to obtain which you have expended considerable labour, and put forth (3) all the ingenuity of your mind. If you be determined on the acquisition of knowledge, and have a just appreciation of its value, you will make corresponding exertions, and secure as your own what you purposed to acquire. Besides this diligence in the work of self-improvement, perseverance is absolutely necessary. Some circumstance may have convinced you of your mental wants; an accidental interview (4) with some intelligent individual engaged like yourself in mercantile pursuits, may have shown to you your ignorance as you had not seen it before, and more deeply impressed upon your mind the necessity of mental culture. For a time, you prosecuted this work with energy: but the little progress you seemed to make, the extent of ground you had to traverse, and the difficulties that rose up as if to forbid (5) a further advance, damped (6) the ar-

(1) Causa, cagione. — (2) Stare, giacere, essere. — (3) Messa fuori, spiegata, esercitata. — (4) Abboccamento, conversazione. — (5) Vietare. — (6) Scemava, indeboliva.

dour of your spirits, relaxed the energies of your mind, weakened your noble purpose, and induced you to relinquish the task as too formidable to be accomplished. With very many has this been the case, and it is probable that nearly (1) all students have had, at times, some such feelings of discouragement. But the fact of such discouragements not being uncommon in the experience of students, should act as a stimulus to go forward, remembering that if others have persevered and overcome, you may go and do likewise. All who desire to obtain learning, whatever may be the amount they determine to possess, should believe that « there is no royal road (2) to it, » that its rugged path must be trodden (3) not only with toil (4), but perseverance. To walk this path a little way, and then to turn back, is humiliating to him who does so. « Forward » should be your motto; and if the path be not smooth (5) nor your senses regaled by the odour of flowers, the music of birds, or the murmuring of brooks (6), yet remember you are approaching something that shall amply reward for the tediousness and cheerlessness of the way, — that the tract which to your senses seems a desert one, leads to a Canaan.

Could learning of any kind be attained without effort and continuous application, the sluggard (7) might share (8)

(1) Quasi. — (2) Strada. — (3) Calcato. — (4) Fatica. — (5) Piano, liscio. — (6) Ruscelli. — (7) Pigro. — (8) Dividere.

with the industrious the laurels of literary fame; and one of the primary ends (1) of study, the discipline of the mind, would then be unrealised. Learning would lose half its value did it not strengthen the mind, which it cannot do unless there be labour and perseverance given in its pursuit. Would you read Euclid? you must be prepared to have your patience tried, and the energy of your mind called into active play. You may read a tale without this, but, in that case, you must not expect to reap the same advantages as you would from reading Euclid. That which is acquired at little expense is generally worth (2) little. We do not set much value upon that which cost us not much trouble to obtain. But that which we secure at a considerable sacrifice of time and labour we are disposed to regard as very valuable. A writer remarking on the boast (3) of one that he wrote his own memoirs (a large octavo) in six or eight days, says, « It cost him nothing; and, what is very natural, it is worth nothing. » Difficulties, then, in the way of obtaining knowledge, will be beneficial to you, if they incite you, as they should, to greater industry and perseverance to overcome them. Besides, is there not a pleasure in overcoming (4) difficulties to which the indolent and irresolute are altogether strangers? The warrior counts not upon so triumphant a return from the bat-

(1) Fini, scopi. — (2) *Is worth*, vale. — (3) Vanto, vantamento. — (4) Vincere, sorpassare.

tle-field, when the enemy has surrendered without opposition, as when, by his courage and military skill, he has obtained a complete victory; and so does he feel a higher pleasure, and is conscious of a nobler triumph, who has climbed (1) the rugged steep (2) of learning, thrust down every obstacle that checked (3) his progress, and seized the treasure as his own, than if he had calmly walked to take possession of it without a single struggle (4). Few have become even respectable in mental attainments, much less distinguished for them, without having been compelled to maintain a spirit of untiring industry and unabated perseverance; and, at the same time, to admit that the difficulties which required such industry and perseverance were essential to the strengthening and improving of their minds. Cultivate, then, a habit of industry and perseverance.

Having mentioned some of the requisites for prosecuting a course of study, it is necessary to answer a question that may now very naturally be proposed. What department of learning, or what books are best for commercial young men to become acquainted with, in order to fit them for more usefulness in the stations which they occupy in society? In answering this question there is some difficulty, as the tastes (5) of men in reference to the different departments of knowledge are

(1) Asceso, si è arrampicato sopra. — (2) Erta scoscese, salita scabra. — (3) Impediva, arrestava, frenava. — (4) Lotta, battaglia. — (5) Gusto.

very varied, and their daily engagements such as to render the course of self-improvement which one might take, not altogether adapted to another. The ship-wright (1) would be more consistent in cultivating the science of mechanics than that of botany, and the build-er (2) in studying geometry rather than geology. It is wise then to direct your attention, first to the study of that which may be directly or indirectly connected with the employment which is or may be assigned to you, and by which you are to support yourself through life.

« Business, as well as other subjects, has its great original and elementary principles. It is a science, yet how few consider it as such! How many are the me-chanics, merchants, and farmers, who do not understand the principles on which their business proceeds; who only acquire a little round of practical detail, in which their minds move like a horse in a mill! They know that, for some reason, a sharp tool (3) cuts better than a dull (4) one, and that it is well to sharpen the tool that is dull; they know how to keep an account of debt and credit, how to buy and sell (5), when they sell at loss or profit, and how to raise their prices when they can get more; they know the appropriate soil,

(1) Falegname di vascello, fabbricatore, costruttore di nave. — (2) Mastro muratore. — (3) Ordigno, stromento. — (4) Ottuso. — (5) Comperare e vendere.

dressing, and cultivation for different crops, and how to dispose of the produce; but they never think of looking for that elementary and scientific knowledge of these things which gives to the mind expansion, elevation, independence, and power. The men who do this are those who eventually stand at the head of their departments, and give laws to the busy (1) world. » To desire knowledge only as it may serve the purpose of pecuniary gain, argues a contracted and barren (2) mind; and those greatly err who imagine that it does not belong (3) to them to be able to explain anything more of the nature of the commodities in which they traffic than what is actually necessary to make use of in their barter (4); and likewise do they err, on the other hand, who consider that to understand what is connected with their business is all the knowledge they need as to this life. To give the attention of the mind principally to that by which you live is no more than justice requires and reason approves; but to give your attention to no other object, is unworthy of your nature — to do the one is right, to do the other is wrong. The writer once knew a young man, a butcher (5) by trade, who was greatly devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, and who was in the habit of rising early in the morning, even in the

(1) Affaccendato, che lavora — (2) Sterile, gretta. — (3) Compete, appartiene, tocca. — (4) Barattare, baratto, cambio. — (5) Macellajo, beccajo.

winter, to study the anatomy of the sheep with a view to the study of the anatomy of the human body. This was nobleness of purpose, and evinced (1) a superior mind.

Although, in all cases, the study of that which bears an affinity to your secular calling may not be productive of pecuniary gain, (and for this reason the study is often forsaken (2)) yet, in many cases, the contrary holds true. The mason (3) might not find it pecuniarily advantageous to him to know that a stone is a number of particles closely united together by the laws of cohesion; but the accountant might find it advantageous to know the philosophy of arithmetic, and the principles of algebraic calculations. The coal (4) merchant might not find a pecuniary benefit accrue (5) from understanding the chemical properties of coal, but the farmer might find it very advantageous to know the chemical properties of the soil.

A knowledge of the French language would prove (6) useful to the greater portion of commercial young men. It is often connected with the transactions of their commercial duties, and offers pecuniary advantages. « In carrying on of trade (7), and in the affairs of merchants, it is frequently of absolute necessity to be able to speak

(1) Indicava, dinotava, palesava. — (2) Abbandonato. — (3) Muratore. — (4) Di carbon fossile. — (5) Provenire, derivare. — (6) Riescirebbe. — (7) Nel negoziare.

and write French. A young man, whether (1) in trade of wholesale (2) or of retail, and especially in the counting-house of a merchant, is worth a great deal more when he possesses the French language than when he does not. » Besides, a young man makes a more creditable appearance in the commercial world when he is conversant with this language than when he staggers (3) at a French sentence, either spoken or written. It ought to be the ambition of young men employed in commercial pursuits to render themselves as valuable as they can, and to take as respectable a standing as is attainable.

We have spoken of the difficulty in directing the minds of commercial young men to courses of study most beneficial for them, arising from the variety of their occupations and the difference of their mental tastes, yet there is a mental improvement important for them to possess, whatever may be the stations they fill, if they have any desire to be distinguished from such grovelling (4) minds as have no sympathy with anything but what is associated with their animal existence.

The first study, then, that claims your attention, and which ought to be taken up whatever be your occupation, is that of your mother tongue. « Bad grammar, » says the ingenious Cobbett, « is only another word for

(1) Sia che, sia, sì. — (2) Indigrosso. — (3) Esita, tituba, sta in dubbio, trema, barcolla. — (4) Grossolano, di pasta grossa, grette.

nonsense. « You will, probably, think that you acquired a sufficient knowledge of your own language during your school days; you may have done so; but, generally speaking, those who forsake this study when they finally forsake the schoolhouse are rather doggerel (1) grammarians. It is one thing to write free from positive inaccuracies, and another to write good English; and, although the one may do for a commercial man, the other would do better. Good diction, either in speaking or writing, stamps respectability upon an individual. Dr. Johnson used to say, that a man was the better all his life from having learned his grammar.

Nothing evidences (2) more clearly an uneducated mind than an ill-written letter, if it does not evidence an ignorant mind; for those who have made themselves intelligent by observation and reading, have generally acquired the art of writing with propriety. The study of your own tongue should be considered first in place and chief in importance; and if you consider what the art of grammar is, this will be apparent. An author has well remarked, that, « The actions of men proceed from their thoughts. In order to obtain the co-operation, the concurrence, or consent of others, we must communicate our thoughts to them. The means (3) of this communication are words, and grammar teaches us how to

(1) Grette, miserabili. — (2) Palesa, scuopre, fa vedere. — (3) Mezzo, mezzi.

make use of words. Therefore, in all ranks, degrees, and situations of life, a knowledge of the principles and rules of grammar must be useful; in some situations it must be necessary to the avoiding of really injudicious errors, and in no situation which calls on a man to place his thoughts upon paper, can the possession of it fail to be a source of self-gratification, or the want of it a cause of mortification and sorrow (1). » Whatever you may have studied, if you have not studied this you cannot rise in society; or, if you do rise, it must be by a display of mighty intellectual power. Cultivate, then, this study, and especially as it may be done at the expense of little time and labour.

Perhaps the study that next claims your attention is that of history, and of English history in particular. Few youug men, even of common education, are entirely ignorant of its leading events: but it is one thing to read history, and another to make it the subject of systematic study. It is not to be taken up in the course of your general reading, but to have allotted (2) for it specific times, in which you should peruse it with constant reference to geography and chronology, which have been called « the eyes (3) of history. » It is not difficult to perceive the importance of this study, for it imparts to you a knowledge of human nature: it shows you man in all ages, in all countries, and in all conditions; the

(1) Dolore, rincrescimento. — (2) Assegnato. — (3) Occhi.

gradual progress of civilization, the grand development of human intellect, and the influence of circumstances in aiding the formation of the moral and political character of communities. It is replete (1) with moral lessons exhibiting the instability of human power, and the ruinous consequences of pride (2) and ungovernable ambition; it teaches you that true greatness must consist in something more than rank or station; that moral excellence alone exalteth, and gives dignity and power to man. The attentive student of history cannot fail of rendering himself a pleasing and instructive companion: he can always draw (3) from his own memory matter for the most profitable conversation, and feels capable of adding fresh interest to almost any subject by the introduction of new facts or pleasing illustration.

With some commercial young men more than an ordinary share of time offers for mental cultivation, and to the attention of such we would strongly recommend the study of the mathematics. This science is of too great an extent to allow of your obtaining more than a small knowledge of it, yet this knowledge is sufficient to secure the end you should chiefly have in view in this study, viz. (4), mental discipline. Nothing can so well discipline your mind as mathematics; they will teach you to think deeply and accurately, and strengthen your

(1) Pieno, ripieno, pregno. — (2) Orgoglio, superbia. — (3) Tirare, trarre. — (4) Viz. videlicet (*lat.*), namely, that is.

reasoning faculties. « Pure mathematics, » says Bacon, « remedy and cure many defects in the wit (1) and faculties intellectual; for, if the wit be dull they sharpen it, if too wandering (2) they fix it, if too inherent in the sense they abstract it. » You might practise arithmetical calculations, read a portion of Euclid, and acquire the art of solving algebraical questions with a moderate degree of industry, and the advantages would far exceed all the labour you would have to bestow. The first and great object of education is to discipline the mind; and, though you cannot go through (3) that systematic course of education which is necessary to discipline the mind in all its parts, yet you may do something towards it; and you should regard this as of more importance than the mere acquisition of knowledge. If you possess knowledge, and do not know how to use it, your knowledge is of little worth. It is certainly something to possess tools (4), but then they are not of much value if we know not how to use them. You may read through volumes, but what of all this, if your memory be weak and treacherous (5)? The writings of a Locke would be of no benefit to you unless your mind were strengthened sufficiently to understand and examine their great truths. Let perception be quick (6) reason strong, and memory retentive, and then you will read to immense advantage. In

(1) Spirito. — (2) Svagato. — (3) Percorrere. — (4) Ordigni, stromenti, ingegni. — (5) Labile, infida, traditrice. — (6) Viva, vivace.

recommending the study of the mathematics, the writer cannot forbear giving the remarks made by a tutor to his pupils, of whom he had the hónour to be one : — « It was not without reason that the Greeks bestowed on this study the title of *the* learning (1); it well deserves the highest encomiums. Languages may become obsolete, systems of philosophy may spring up (2), flourish, fade, and be forgotten; even what we are apt to account facts in natural history, may, by future discoveries, be proved to be fictions; but the truths of mathematics are unchangeable and indisputable, time cannot alter them, scepticism cannot obscure them. It would be difficult to point out (3), in the whole compass (4) of human knowledge, one portion which so much tends to the enlargement of the mind and the discipline of its powers, as the study of mathematics. It produces a habit of patient investigation, of calm and dispassionate judgment; it accustoms the mind to distinguish between that which is true and that which is false: it takes nothing for granted that can possibly be gainsayed (5); it ascends from truths simple and easy of apprehension — truths that no man in his senses will venture to impugn — to the highest range of human thought and human intellect, while every step in the passage is as firmly fixed as the eternal rocks. »

(1) Scienza, erudizione. — (2) Sorgere. — (3) Additare. — (4) Cerchio. — (5) Contraddetto.

There are other studies which you might profitably pursue to a certain extent, such as mechanics, chemistry, and like subjects of natural philosophy, which are both useful and entertaining; but we dwell (1) not upon these, since few into whose hands this tract may fall, may have both the time and taste for such studies; and since the three we have already dwelt upon are, in our opinion, sufficient, as subjects of systematic study, to answer the ends which those destined to commercial pursuits may need and desire. Nevertheless (2), we would prescribe no boundary to your advance in either art or science. These regions are as open to you as to others, and it is as much your prerogative, when circumstances permit, to enter and explore them, as it is his whose name, as a philosopher, is engraven (3) on the roll of immortality. « For the ground of a man's culture lies in his nature, not in his calling. His powers are to be unfolded (4) on account of their inherent dignity, not their outward direction. He is to be educated because he is a man, not because he is to make shoes, nails, or pins (5). A trade is plainly not the great end of his being; for his mind cannot be shut up in it; his force of thoughts cannot be exhausted on it. He has faculties to which it gives no action; and deep wants it

(1) Ci fermiamo, ci stendiamo. — (2) Tuttavia, ciò non ostante. — (3) Scolpito, inciso, scritto. — (4) Sviluppate, svolte. — (5) Scarpe, chiodi o spilli.

cannot answer. » We would, in leaving this part of our subject, urge upon you the necessity of disciplining the mind by diligent, persevering, and systematic study; « of bringing it under proper subjection, of making it become obedient to you, and of fitting it for future acquisitions and future usefulness. »

We now come to make some observations on *general reading*. Many who have not time or sufficient physical energy after the labours of the day to pursue a systematic course of study, have yet some moments and some physical vigour, to experience both pleasure and profit by general reading; and to such, as well as others, some hints on this head (1) may not be altogether unacceptable.

Here we enter upon a field (2) as extensive as the boundless ocean; a field amid whose beauteous flowers are plants of deadliest poison (3); and amid whose paths that wind (4) to retreats of light and loveliness, are those that conduct to the recesses of gloom (5) — to the very shadow of death. (6) On entering upon such a track (7) in quest of truth, you need a chart to direct you where it lies; and especially do those need direction as to what books are best to read, whose scanty (8) time would render the reading of such as are corrupt or trivial doubly injurious.

(1) Capo, soggetto. — (2) Campo. — (3) Mortale veleno. — (4) Serpeggiano, conducono. — (5) Oscurità, tristezza, tetraggine. — (6) Ombra della morte. — (7) Traccia, sentiero. — (8) Scarso.

It may be said of reading, as of making, books, — there is no end. You may read much and know little, and read little and know much. How important then to know what books to read, and how they should be read! In answering the first question, we cannot do better than commence by telling you what you should *not* read.

We would say, then, read not those works which are daily issuing from the press under the designation of novels. Discard (1) them as the insinuating corrupter of the mind — as the attractive but vitiating companion of youth. We do not mean to affirm that all are alike (2) injurious, nor that truth may not be presented to the mind under the form of fiction, but that the majority of works under that form are intended and adapted only to gratify the lower propensities of our nature. Even the writings of Sir Walter Scott have a spell (3) about them which is likely to make you more and more in love with such kind of reading, and give you a distaste for every other. « Who does not know that they who are given to reading works of fiction, leave a mass of most valuable and solid reading untouched and unknown? » And who, desirous of truth, and having but little time for its acquisition, would be so irrational as to read that which is more calculated to stunt or stultify his intellectual growth (4), than to give vigour and enlargement to his mind? If even you might gain some improve-

(1) Scartate, rigettate. — (2) Ugualmente, del pari. — (3) Fasciuo, incanto. — (4) Creseimento.

ment from the perusal of such books, why spend your money for that which is scarcely bread? Why not go the direct road to improvement? You would not, in travelling upon some important business, take a circuitous route, if there were a direct road to the place whither (1) you were journeying; and why should you, in quest of knowledge, loiter (2) on your course to its repository? why stay (3) to be amused with every tinselled (4) object that may present itself to your notice, when you know not but that circumstances may arise that may prevent you from ever obtaining much of this imperishable treasure? You may urge your plea (5) for novel-reading, upon the ground that it affords a relaxation to your mind. Were you much engaged in abstruse studies, you might with better grace urge this plea; but, even then, are there not an abundance of works of the most captivating description, and of the most edifying nature, by the reading of which your mind would have ample relaxation?

But you have no time to read for relaxation apart from edification; the time at best that you have for self-improvement is very contracted, and, therefore, you need to be exceedingly careful how you occupy it. It is not, however, solely on account of the time that is comparatively, and more often absolutely, lost in reading the works we have alluded to, that you should shun (6)

(1) Al quale, dove. — (2) Indugiare, tardare, trattenervi. — (3) Fermarvi. — (4) Orpellato. — (5) Ragione, argomento, scusa. — (6) Evitare, scansare.

them altogether, but on account of the evil influence that is exerted on the mind after they have been perused (1). It is true that some minds may feel, after reading such productions, no exciting and injurious influence; but such minds are only exceptions, and rare very rare; and few have a right to presume that they possess such self-control: for works of this character contain in general matter, not for the active exercise of thought, but for the idle play (2) of the imagination, producing a dreamy and wandering (3) state of mind, which few have power to check or prevent, and giving frequently a stimulus to the mind for projects, wild in their character, and sometimes ruinous in their consequences. The wary (4) lover, the fair but foolish maiden (5), their grief and joy, their sighs (6), their vows (7), their tears, are all so felicitously depicted in the amorous plot (8), as to render the perusal of it calculated to work upon the susceptibilities of your nature, to excite its passions, and unfit your mind to contemplate the sober realities of truth, and steadily to pursue that course of intellectual training which leads to the noble possession of moral wealth and true happiness. When you have laid down a novel, do you find yourself a better man than when you took it up? and is your mind more vigor-

(1) Lette. — (2) Vaneggiamento, trastullo. — (3) Svagato, girovago. — (4) Scaltro, avveduto, astuto. — (5) Fanciulla, verginella. — (6) Sospiri. — (7) Voti, giuramenti. — (8) Intreccio, nodo.

ous for the investigation of some important subject? Do you perform the monotonous duties of life with more success and pleasure, or do they not appear more dull and monotonous than ever, so that you would fain have the wings of a dove, that you might flee to some fairy land, and quaff (1) the cup of pleasure amid its enchanting scenery? It is not difficult to anticipate the answers that must be given to such questions. They are daily practically answered in the conversation, manners, and actions of *novel-readers.*

Let one young man devote his time to the reading of fiction, and another to the study of philosophy, and you will soon discover a developement of character in the one, as different from that of the other as fiction is from philosophy. But what harm (2) can accrue from reading a *little* of fictitious works? Your *little* reading is likely to end in *much* reading. Besides, if your little reading does you no harm, does it do you good? Remember that if you could gain more by giving your time to the reading of some other book than to the one which does you no harm, and you do not, you are a loser according to the old adage—a penny saved is a penny got. A person that might augment his property and does not, may be said to be a loser. The rule for you to adopt in improving your mind is, to secure as much time for it as you can, and to employ it to the

(1) Bere, trincare. — (2) Male, danno.

best advantage. Act upon this firmly and constantly, and you cannot fail to get knowledge and rise in intelligence.

Politics is a branch of knowledge which it is advisable you should attend to with caution. Thousands, in steering (1) their course through life, have foundered (2) in this dangerous sea. In voyaging on it, you need to be on your guard that you are not drawn unawares (3) into some vortex. To give intelligent consideration to the science of human government, is highly commendable and really important; but this is somewhat different from giving an undue (4) attention to that which is a mere substitute for this science, viz., the factious politics of parties. Politics, as attended to and understood by the mass, is little else than an exhibition of party feeling, and the bitter (5) hostility of political sects; and those who are only happy when meddling (6) with them, are more likely to acquire a facility in political abuse (7), than an aptness for comprehending political science. We do not say that you should not attend to what is going on in the political world, but that you should not attend to it with the avidity the mass of society generally do. If you desire to study the principles of civil government, and to ascertain what principles and laws are best adapted to secure the greatest amount of happiness to

(1) Timoneggiare, dirigere. — (2) Affondati, naufragati. — (3) Inavvedutamente, all'improvvista. — (4) Indebita, sconveniente, soverchia. — (5) Acerba, acre, avvelenata. — (6) S'impacciano. — (7) Contumelie, villanie, invettive.

a nation at large, you must not merely go to the journals of the day, but to the writers on « political economy, » and take up the subject as one requiring deep thought and patient investigation. Few subjects do the generality of individuals think themselves more capable of discussing than those of a political nature, although their previous qualifications for it are often exceedingly inefficient. An attention to the political movements of the present day, without duly fortifying the mind against their seductive and all-absorbing influence, is likely to impede, if not entirely to prevent, intellectual progression. There is naturally in us, more or less, at least in young persons, a love of novelty, change, and excitement. The result of an election, an expression in a parliamentary debate, the discharge (1) of a servant of the Crown, and even a squabble (2) among the ladies of the bed-chamber, will become a topic of conversation for a week or a month, in the mansion as well as in the meanest domicile. To talk on such subjects is easy work; and because it is so, too many like to adopt this mode of being *thought* intelligent. But they cannot succeed in sensible company. The proofs of a well-cultured mind lie beyond the capability of descanting (3) on the news of the day. The most ungifted minds, the meanest intellects, are proficients at this.

(1) Licenziare, congedo, demissione. — (2) Zuffa, rissa, baruffa. — (3) Comentare, osservare, discorrere.

The newspaper (1) — that mighty organ of good and evil, attracting the attention of all classes of society, giving direction to human opinion, and influencing the world of mind—should be read in some intervening moments of the day, and not occupy any portion of that time which should be given to the systematic work of self-culture. In like manner should other periodicals, « excepting such as are devoted to grave discussions of important principles, » together with every species of light reading, be dispatched, and never occupy the place due to study. Reading of this kind is, perhaps, the greatest drawback (2) to real mental cultivation. Those who complain that they have no time for study, are often the very individuals who brood over the contents of a newspaper for hours, forgetting the amount of time they consume in this way in a year. We call it comparatively waste of time, for how little is retained of such reading; how few are able to recollect at the end of a week, a day, or an hour, a thousandth part of what they have gleaned (3) from the journals and periodicals of the day! « After you have spent hours over them, it is very doubtful whether you have done anything more than crowd the mind with vague images and impressions, which decidedly weaken the memory. » Let those who may be disinclined to credit this assertion, test the truth of it in their own experience.

(1) Il giornale. — (2) (Ribasso, sconto), ostacolo, impedimento, nemico. — (3) Spigolato.

As to what you *should* read, a remark or two may comprise all that is necessary to be said on this point. Read the writings of the best and the wisest of men, « such as others has tried, and can testify to their worth; » books which have bequeathed (1) to their authors immortal fame. Of course, you must choose (2) from among these according to your taste, and to the knowledge in which you are most deficient; but only choose from among *such* books. To commune with great minds through their works, is the surest way to become rich and powerful in thought, and to have expansive and noble views of truth. Who would talk with a novelist, when he might hold converse with a Milton or a Locke? « In reading the thoughts of such men, thoughts greater than the growth of our own minds are transplanted into them; and feelings more profound, sublime, or comprehensive, are insinuated amidst our ordinary train (3), while, in the eloquence with which they are clothed (4) we learn a new language, worthy of the new ideas that are created in us. Of how much pure and exalted enjoyment is he ignorant, who never entertained, as angels, the bright and loftier emanations of loftier intellects than his own! By habitual communion with superior spirits, we are not only enabled to think their thoughts, speak their dialects, feel their emotions, but our own thoughts are refined, our scanty language

(1) Legato, donato. — (2) Sceglicre. — (3) Serie, seguito, treno, corteo. — (4) Rivestite.

is enriched, our common feelings are elevated; and though we never attain their standard (1), yet, by keeping company with them, we shall rise above our own, as trees growing in the society of a forest are said to draw each other up into shapely (2) and stately proportion, while field and hedgerow stragglers, exposed to all weathers, never reach (3) their full stature, luxuriance, and beauty. »

You would not deny that the best food is conducive to the health and vigour of the body; and is it not equally necessary that food for the mind should be of the best quality? It is not that inferior works contain nothing to benefit that we counsel you not to read them, but because there are works which would impart incalculably more benefit — because you should not toil for a shilling when you might obtain a pound. You may become mentally opulent, if you will gather up (4) the treasures which the mightiest spirits of our earth have left behind them.

The greatest minds that were ever created, and who have passed away, have given their thoughts as a legacy to the world, a legacy common to all, and one more valuable than the wealth of empires. Oh, tis an elevated pleasure to converse with the wise— the great—the good; to summon, as it were, into our presence « the distant and the dead, » and to have our minds strengthened and refreshed by their eloquence and wisdom!

(1) Taglio, altezza, misura. — (2) Simmetrica, formosa. — (3) Pervengono a. — (4) Raccogliere.

If the works of some great authors be too extensive for your perusal, you may remedy this by reading abridgments (1) of them. If you cannot read through the deep reasoning of many volumes, read through one. Because you cannot dig up (2) all the wealth of a mine, do not cease to labour for a part of it. A page of some standard (3) work is of more value than a volume which cost its author little more trouble than the mere act of writing. It is not *how much* you read that should be a matter of concern with you, but *what* you read. Many minds have had a nobility given to them — have been propelled (4) on to noble achievements in learning — from the perusal of one book. « If I may be allowed to speak of my own experience, » says President Porter, « as a theological student, I would say, that to 'Edwards on the Will,' which I read at least three several times before I entered the ministry, besides frequent reviews of it since, I am more indebted than to all other human productions. The aid which it gave was to me invaluable.» A bad book, especially a licentious one, has an opposite, but not less powerful, tendency; for it often gives a tone and bias (5) to the mind, which last through life. Beware of such books; shun them as a pestilence, lest your moral nature become loath somely (6) corrupted — lest your end be shame and ruin.

(1) Compendj. — (2) Disotterrare, scavare. — (3) Classica, elegantissima. — (4) Stimolati, spinti, risospinti. — (5) Piega, cattiva piega. — (6) Schifosamente, abominevolmente.

But it is not only important *what* you read, but *how* you read. From a want of due attention to this, it is to be feared that numbers have profited but little from having read even the best of authors. It is as vain to cram (1) the mind with knowledge if you wish to benefit from it, as it to overcharge your stomach with food.

The mind must have time to digest by reflection what it receives. « Meditation and reflection are the better half of study. » Accustom yourself, as you peruse (2) a book, to pause at the end of every paragraph or sentence to consider what you have read—to ask yourself, do I uuderstand it? do I believe it? is it true or false? Such a method as this will astonishingly expand and improve your mind, and accelerate your progress in knowledge.

But will not this method of reading be a *slow* (3) one? Yes, very slow, but very sure and very profitable. By this method you will acquire a habit of thought, whereby (4) you will be enabled to turn what you read to good account, and increase to a great extent the usefulness of your knowledge. Thought generates thought; one idea of a great author suggests to a reflecting mind a train of others, and frequently opens up a wide field for intellectual range. To have the power of creating thoughts, of concentratiug them upon any subject, of directing and controlling them at pleasure, is to have

(1) Rimpinzare. — (2) Leggete. — (3) Lento. — (4) Con cui.

advanced far in self-improvement. « Intellectual culture consists not chiefly, as many are accustomed to think, in accumulating information, though this is important, but in building up a force of thought which may be turned at will on any subject on which we are called to pass judgment. »

Our intercourse with great men through their works should not weaken our intellectual independence. We read to be better fitted to think and judge for ourselves, and not to pin (1) our faith (2) to the sleeve (3) of any man, how extolled soever he may be, unless reason give consent. It is a fine characteristic of a mind to pay reverence to the opinions of great men, and yet not to allow them to shackle (4) the free, patient, and independent action of its own. The mere act of gathering knowledge from books is similar to collecting materials for a building, valuable in themselves, but comparatively useless, without the exercise of that intellectual power which forms out of them a noble and beautiful structure. « It is not so important to know everything, as to know the exact value of everything; to appreciate what we learn, and to *arrange* (5) what we know. »

But books are not the only means of obtaining knowledge; much may be acquired from lectures, observation, and from the conversation of intelligent individuals.

(1) (Attaccare con uno spillo), affibbiare. — (2) Fede, credenza. — (3) Manica. — (4) Inceppare, Impastojare. — (5) Riordinare, assestare.

With respect to lectures, we certainly should advise you to be careful of what time you give to them, since the knowledge you might thence derive, could be more successfully obtained from books. In regard to the one method of communicating knowledge, you must keep pace (1) [with the lecturer (2), whilst in regard to the other, you can take your own time, and reflect as the subject is unfolded (3) to you. On observation we need only remark, that there is no time nor place, circumstance nor engagement, which excludes you from this method of improving your mind. The crowded objects of the city, as well as the more beauteous works of nature, impart instruction to those who are ready to learn; and you may find, to use the words of an immortal bard,—

«—tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.»

« Nature, revelation, the human soul, and human life, are freely unfolded to every eye. The great sources of wisdom are experience and observation, and these are denied (4) to none. To open and fix our eyes upon what passes without and within us is the most fruitful study. »

Sir Walter Scott said he had never met with a man, however humble his calling, without learning something from him. It is surprising to find individuals (as

(1) Camminare a pari passo. — (2) Professore (di Università). — (3) Svolto, spiegato, sviluppato. — (4) Rifiutate, negate.

we sometimes do), who seem to know a little of everything, although they have never read nor studied much; we can only attribute it to their allowing nothing to escape their notice. A constant habit of observing what is passing around you should be cherished as a means of knowledge—knowledge, too, which is not conveyed (1) to us by books.

As to conversation, much might be said on what may be obtained in this way. Those who seek the best books for improvement, will surely seek virtuous and intelligent individuals for their companions. It is a great privilege to be acquainted with persons wiser than ourselves; you cannot but be improved by it if you will. It must be indeed your own fault, if you have to exclaim, « I have lost my time in the company of the learned. » You cannot be long in the company of another without being either the better or the worse: you will (it may be imperceptibly) copy something from him. It was the advice of a professional gentleman, of considerable talent and learning, to a young friend who complained of want of more time for reading, to entertain at his house literary men, and thus he would acquire knowledge without labouring for it. « He who is permitted to draw from this great fountain, can hardly fail of having thought poured upon him sufficient to render him intelligent, even though he should never open a book. »

(1) Comunicata, data, trasmessa.

Varilles has said that « of ten things which he knew, he had learned nine from conversation. »

Be choice, then, of your companions, if you wish (1) to improve by them; act upon the advice of the wisest of men, — « Go from the presence of a foolish man when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. » Time is too valuable, and the space allotted to man too short, to be frittered away in the society of triflers, when it might be profitably and delightfully employed in the society of those who dispense light and intelligence in whatever circle they move. When you are in the company of one superior to yourself in intellect and acquirements, ply him with questions, obtain from him as much as you possibly can, without wearying him, or infringing on the laws of politeness. Shun, above everything, the companionship of those whose conversation is polluted by profaneness or licentiousness. Such will inevitably defile (2) you, corrupt your manners, deteriorate your mind, vitiate your taste, and soon render you a complete counterpart of themselves. You may be slow (3) to learn what is good, but not so as to what is evil. You are more likely to copy from another what is bad, and leave what is good, than copy what is good, and leave what is bad. This is poor human nature, frail and weak at best. Young men are very apt, when

(1) Desiderate, volete. — (2) Contaminare, lordare. — (3) Lento, tardo.

together, to indulge in loose (1) conversation; and hardly anything so assimilates them do the spirit of darkness as this, for it argues a degraded mind, a filthy (2) taste, and a foul (3) heart; for out of a pure heart can come forth nothing but what is pure. Besides, such conversation is so unmeaning (4), so useless, so wanton (5), so vile, and so destroying, that it should never be countenanced by any who have one spark (6) of virtuous feeling within their breasts; but should be shunned as the noisome pestilence, and fled from as you would the fires of the bottomless pit (7).

That you may not be drawn into immoral company, or be exposed to the temptation af sharing in its giddy mirth (8) resort not to theatres, concert-rooms, or other places of fashionable amusements. Such a caution need not be given to those whose religious principles teach them « to flee youthful lusts (9) and follow after righteousness. » They have no sympathy with anything that has a tendency to deteriorate their moral nature; and that such places have such a tendency, we think, were it in harmony with the design of this treatise, and did space permit, we could easily demonstrate. But it is not only on moral, but also on intellectual grounds, that we would counsel young men to forsake the retreats (10) of

(1) Dissoluto. — (2) Schifo, sporco. — (3) Sozzo, Immondo. — (4) Insulso, stupido, Inscnsato. — (5) Lascivo. — (6) Scintilla. — (7) Abisso, inferno. — (8) Allegria. — (9) Concupiscenza. — (10) Ridotti.

gay amusements. To say the least, they allure without profiting, they engage the attention and engross a large portion of time without giving an equivalent in return; and it is not compatible with the dignity of a rational, an accountable, and an immortal being, to participate in amusements which are incapable of profiting.

There is naturally an inclination in young men, rather to seek that which excites the passions and pleasurably influences the senses, than that which especially engages the judgment and the reflecting faculties. This inclination is a sufficient obstacle to mental pursuits, without having fresh strength given to it; and with many, unless (1) their love for acquiring knowledge be very ardent indeed, the temptation to listen to a well-sung song will be stronger than the inducement to read a well-written book; and the gaudy (2) or ludicrous exhibitions of some playhouse (3) will appear to them more attractive than anything that could be presented in the lecture-room. Some will defend their nightly visits to the assemblies of the giddy and the gay, on the ground that they impart many moral lessons in an agreeable manner, and give a better knowledge of men and manners than anything beside; but we need only adduce, in refutation of this position, the fact that the characters who frequent our «*evening entertainments*» are chiefly those whose motto is « let us eat and drink (4) for to-morrow we die. »

(1) A meno che. — (2) Sfoggiate. (3) — Teatro. — (4) Mangiamo e beviamo.

We learn more of men and things in the reading-room, or the lecture-room, than at the card-table, the theatre, the dance, or the tavern revelry (1). If anything be learnt at such places, it is the practice of immoral habits and loose conversation, and the proof of this is too frequently, alas! and too deplorably, developed in practice to admit of a doubt. There is nothing in such recreations, if recreations they can be called, that can, in any way, assist those devoted to mental culture, or give facilities for the range of sober and elevated thought. The steady and anxious seeker of knowledge knows that there is a spell (2) about them which strengthens the oftener these scenes are frequented, and that when a young man has once become fastened (3) by it, the pursuits of inspiring literature must be abandoned, and systematic study forsaken as a chimerical enterprise. Those living in large towns, and at all desirous of having their minds enlightened, and their hearts purified, should especially be careful what amusements they seek, and what time they give to them; for the temptations in such towns are numerous, and more speedily than they are aware are they liable (4) to fall into them. When once an inclination is created to pass a leisure hour in vain and idle amusements, they will soon become unfitted for anything else,—and all the endearing

(1) Orgie. — (2) Fascino, incanto, incantesimo, malia. — (3) Legato, attaccato, affascinato. — (4) Soggetti, esposti.

delights which accompany intellectual pursuits, and which once, it may be, they anticipated experiencing, will only become farther removed from them: whilst, as the love of sensual enjoyments waxes stronger and stronger, their mental and physical nature will, at length, be destroyed by reckless (1) dissipation. Cultivate, then, a taste for what is pure and intellectual, as the best means of being kept from imbibing what is impure and sensual, — remembering « that there is a susceptibility of incessant elevation in the human character, enabling you to pass from the animal man to the rational man, from the rational to the intellectual man, from the intellectual to the spiritual man — transformed into the Divine image, and soaring to joys unutterable. »

There is one means of self-improvement which we would especially urge upon the attention of those who by local circumstances are more exposed to the temptations offered by the various places of gaiety and pleasure which exist in our large towns. We allude to those associations which are designated « Friendly Discussion, or Mutual Improvement Societies. »

When rightly conducted, and carried on in a right spirit, they become of great use to all who wish for real improvement, and we offer a few remarks in support of this, that some may avail themselves (2) of their advantages, and others be induced to form such

(1) Non curante, spensierata. — (2) Valersi, giovarsi.

associations themselves where they may not exist; and we remark, first, respecting them, *that they promote a spirit of research.*

Set a man on this road, and you have accomplished the greater part of what is necessary to raise (1) him above the world of monotonous thought and antiquated notions — create in him a thirst (2) for investigation, and nothing can arrest his onward course: you can then no more keep him ignorant than roll back the mountain torrent.

But this spirit of research has, with most, to be implanted, and it is often necessary for a man to know and feel his ignorance before be will take much pains to remove it. And nothing, we think, tends more to this, than that kind of intercourse of which we are now speaking, — for our ignorance then appears more conspicuous, and our knowledge is stringently tasked. Discussion is a pretty (3) good criterion to ascertain a man's mental stamina, and most retire from it convinced that they are of less intellectual dimensions than they believed when they entered upon it. Such a conclusion, then, is calculated to promote a spirit of research. No one likes to appear less than he thought himself to be. He will add a cubit to his mental stature if he can. Whatever incites to this is good, and friendly discussions are, in this respect, most desirable.

(1) Innalzare, elevare. — (2) Sete, brama. — (3) Bastantemente.

Another advantage derived from them is, that they quicken (1) *thought.*

As iron sharpens (2) iron, so mind quickens mind. It is with the mental as with the bodily powers, that action increases the capability of action, and is productive of augmented strength. It is painful to contemplate the world of mental stagnancy. It may, not unfitly, be compared to the broad lake, when amid the deep calm of an autumnal eve no zephyr ripples (3) its glassy (4) surface. This intellectual torpor is generally seen when mind has little contact with mind—where it exists comparatively alone. Hence the marked difference, as to mental developement, which exists between a town and rustic population. In the former, they become sharp as it were (5) by friction—in the latter, they are deadened (6) by isolation. In the town population there may not be much depth or range (7) of thought, but there is some mental life. Intellect is quickened, and the petty disputations of the market—the keen (8) contention in barter—the shrewd (9) contrivances for gain—and the busy talk on passing events—all tend to effect this. In those who dwell where there is almost the absence of these things, we find a somewhat opposite state of mind.

(1) Avvivano. — (2) Come il ferro aguzza. — (3) Increspa. — (4) Liscia, levigata. — (5) Per dirlo così, per così dire. — (6) Ammortati, intorpiditi, istupiditi. — (7) Profondità o estensione. — (8) Acuto, sottile, fino, furbo, astuto, oculato, arguto. — (9) Sagaci, perspicaci, scaltrite.

They may be surrounded (1) by all that is adapted to charm the eye and regale the senses. Nature may unfold to them her brightest scenes: yet thought is not quickened. Her voice is not heard by the *unlettered* mind. The sunny hill, the flowing stream, the glowing landscape, speak — eloquently speak, but the rustic understands not their language, nor hears the music of their voice. Such scenes are unimpressive when mind has no reciprocity of action. Nature can quicken mind, but mind cannot quicken nature. Even in regard to books, we perceive how in some particulars friendly controversy may have the superiority in quickening thought. Books, like nature, are silent teachers — they give us facts — they furnish us with thoughts, and, what is still more important, they suggest thoughts, — but we speak to them and they do not answer us. We sometimes understand not their meaning — we cannot interpret their language; but they speak on, uttering (2) the same voice — speaking the same language. A reason why books so often fail to be as productive of good as they might, may be found in the fact, that they are read with too much belief — with too much willingness to receive as truth what another may choose to write; or it may arise from selecting authors for whom we have a predilection, and in whose favour, on account of some excellences, we are prejudiced. In friendly discussions

(1) Circondati. — (2) Profferendo.

these things do not easily occur, for, in an association of this nature, we have the opinions of many — we cannot select the mind with whom only we will converse. We are not likely to receive as truth all that each may have to say, otherwise we should receive as truth a mass most heterogeneous — a medley (1) most complete. Opinions vary — our views are controverted — thought combats with thought — action and reaction goes on, and mind is quickened.

There is one more benefit we would name as derivable from these associations, which is, *the eliciting of truth.*

Pre-eminently do we think that they conduce to this. This will appear from what we have already said. If discussion incites to research, and tends to quicken thought, two important steps are secured towards the discovery of truth, and more than this, it tends to bring out to the light what a man does believe. It is necessary to remove error, in order to implant truth. Dislodge error from the mind, and you must lodge truth in its place. The mind knows of no vacuity, and it is painful to contemplate the vast amount of positive error which is piled up (2) like worthless lumber (3) in the human soul, and often continues to be thus piled, till consumed by the fire of a manly and honest controversy. Discus-

(1) Guazzabuglio. — (2) Abbiccato, ammucchiato. — (3) Masseriziaccia, arnesi usati.

sion seems to give a kind of resuscitation to the train of false ideas which by the absence of quickening influences had descended to the grave of memory, but which, when called up from their sepulchre and placed in their true light, excited our wonder, that ever they could have found in us a welcome and a home.

It is surprising how prone we are to consider our own views correct — our own opinions as the true ones, especially if they have never been contravened, or if the arguments adduced against them have wanted strength and clearness. Like the eastern prince, who disbelieved the existence of ice (1) because he had never seen it, we are inclined to think that there are no arguments to overturn (2) our favourite theories, because we have never been brought in contact with them. Now, to an honest and unprejudiced mind, nothing is better calculated to give true views on a subject than the calm examination of the views of others, and the comparing of those views with our own, just as, in selecting a commodity of life, we maka a comparison, in order to select the best.

There is, too, in discussion, what is of great advantage — immediate and striking contrast. It is when things are thus placed that they most impress us. The hill appears but of small elevation when our eye surveys the mountain heights. The barrenness of the heath (3)

(1) Ghiaccio. — (2) Rovesciare. — (3) La sterilità della landa.

looks more barren still (1) when the flowery landscape girts (2) it on every side. The cloudy evening seems to wear a darker aspect when it has been preceded by a cloudless (3) day. So it is in reasoning. Error appears more glaring (4), and truth more radiant, when placed in juxtaposition.

Such are some of the benefits which we consider may be obtained by an attendance on an association formed to discuss great and important truths: and, in addition to what we have stated, we might also name the habit of good speaking, which may be so favourably acquired at such societies; a qualification which may be found, in after life, to have been worth possessing.

There is one thing more we must name which has a bearing upon our subject, and that is *marriage.*

Multitudes of young men have never been able to rise in mental attainments, or even in their own commercial occupations, above what is comparatively mean and grovelling; and why? because they married *too soon.* They married before they had a competency to meet the expenses attendant upon this union, and they were never able to recover themselves. Their whole time and soul being engrossed (5) about what they should eat and wherewithal (6) they should be clothed (7), intellectual culture

(1) Ancora. — (2) Cinge. — (3) Senza nuvolo, sereno. — (4) (Abbarbagliante) patente, evidente. — (5) Assorbite, occupate. — (6) Con che — (7) Vestiti.

was utterly (1) forsaken, and the mind was left to be clouded (2) by ignorance and error. If you wish to settle in life (3) so as to maintain through it a respectable standing as a commercial man, take care that you have, previous to your entering into the matrimonial state, well counted the cost, and made preparation accordingly. See to it that you lay a good foundation, before you attempt to rear the superstructure; and if you desire to pass through life with a good stock (4) of knowledge, and to be respected for your intelligence and information, lay up this stock, if possible, and cultivate your mind before you take that step which is inseparably connected with domestic cares.

That you may advance in knowledge in the married state we admit, for there is scarcely any condition in which this may not be done, but it is highly probable you will not have the opportunity for the work of systematic study, and that your means of intellectual improvement will, at best, be irregular and precarious. How desirable is it to have both the head and the pocket replenished before taking upon you the marriage vow; for the wants which are inseparably connected with such a union draw largely both on the head and the pocket. The duties which devolve upon a parent are not those which may be undertaken without much con-

(1) Del tutto, affatto. — (2) Annuvolato, appannato. — (3) Accasarvi, stabilirvi. — (4) Fondo.

sideration and previous attention to the right culture both of the head and heart. They are onerous, and involve great and solemn responsibility; and the rashness and thoughtlessness (1) with which many young men enter into a state which entails upon them (2) the discharge of parental duties is as astonishing as it is culpable, and can only be attributed to the want of that strength of judgment and reason, to obtain which we urge them to remain longer in a state of celibacy.

Youth is the time for intellectual improvement; then the spirits are buoyant, the mind active, and capable of being trained and disciplined; habits are more easily rooted up (3); prejudices more easily removed, and hope burns (4) with a brighter flame. — We are altogether, at that period, more *alterable* creatures. It is the spring of life, and the seed-time too; and if the season be well occupied in sowing (5), great expectations may be entertained of reaping (6) a plenteous harvest (7); but neglect to sow then, and it is probable you will never sow at all; and if you do, it will be at an unfavourable season — for remember, human life has no second spring. At this period the cares of domestic life have not cast their shadows over your « primrose path. » You are, in a great measure, freed from those heavy duties which

(1) Temerità e spensieratezza. — (2) Li obbliga a. — (3) Sradicati. — (4) Arde, brucia. — (5) Seminare. — (6) Raccogliere, mietere. — (7) Messe.

devolve more upon those who have passed on to the meridian of life. What you will be through life will, in a very great degree, be determined by what you are *now*.

If you neglect self-improvement now, it is very probable you will never do otherwise. The writer has frequently met with individuals who deplored the heedless and neglectful manner in which they suffered their youthful days to glide by -- the advantages for mental improvement they disregarded, the frivolities with which they sought to fill up their leisure time; and who, though feeling and lamenting these things, and desirous of making some intellectual advancement during the remainder of their lives, confessed, with regret, that anxieties of a domestic kind, and their own want of application arising from cherished habits opposed to studious pursuits, appeared obstacles in the way too great to be surmounted. Of how many is this the confession! Could such roll back the wheels of time, and commence again the journey of life, how gladly would they improve its spring-time in the hope of reaping fruit in after years! But this, alas! cannot be, and the consequences of misemployed time will and must be felt without the power of recalling it. « O! » said one, as he lay dying, « call back time again; if you can call back time again, then there may be hope for me; but time is gone! »

It must not, however, be supposed that there is no making up in more mature years somewhat for the neglect of self-culture at an earlier period. Numerous

instances might be cited of individuals making considerable progress in learning, though they commenced comparatively late in life. But still these are exceptions; and what we wish to impress upon you is, that the rule is always to be taken, and not the exceptions. If, however, you have disregarded the cultivation of your mind during a period most advantageous for the work, do not continue to neglect it; still you may do something, and although you may not be able to acquire that amount of knowledge which you might have acquired had your mind been directed to it earlier, yet acquire what you can. Light is cheering and pleasant, if its rays dart but faintly on our pathway. Remain not, then, in darkness because you may not expect the light of perfect day to pour in upon your soul. Let no place or circumstance prevent your acquiring knowledge. Whenever and wherever a leisure moment offers, improve it; and, that you may be prepared to do this, always carry a book in your pocket. If the writer may refer to his own experience on this point, he would say, that by following this course for years, he has acquired a considerable portion of his information. In waiting for another, if it be but for a minute or two, open your book, you may fasten on a sentence that will supply you with matter for thought for hours afterwards. You will be told that, in so doing, business will most likely be neglected, and that business must be attended to; but may it not be said in answer, that the mind should not be neglected,

and that business cannot be neglected when there is no business to be transacted. The interest of a master is not more likely to be promoted when his servant is sitting or standing idle than when he is enlightening his mind by means of a book; for if he be not, in his spare moments, gathering up the thoughts of others, it is very probable that his own, like the fool's eye, will be wandering to the ends of the earth. Thousands in this great city waste a considerable fraction of their time in *waiting* for business. Now, if they cannot put forth fresh efforts to obtain it, it were better for them, till it comes to occupy themselves in the important duty of self-improvement. Time, invaluable time, should never be passed in idleness; for time with us will soon be no more. Acquire knowledge, then, whenever you can. In all places, under all circumstances, acquire knowledge. Let your determination to acquire it be but fixed, and you will succeed.

Before concluding these hints on mental improvement, we deem it most important to offer a remark on the necessity of moral improvement.

Self-culture, to be truly so, must be religious as well as intellectual. To attend to the mind, in neglect of the heart, is to attend only to a *part* of your nature. It is like adorning the casket, while the jewel remains incrustated with soil. There can be no compensation found for the neglect of the religious culture of the social and benevolent affections of your nature. To be mentally

great, is of little account, in comparison with being morally good. The union of the two forms the complete — the really great man. Intellectual superiority and attainments may ally you to the statesman, the philosopher, or the poet; but moral goodness unites you to God, and this alone can do it. How unphilosophical as well as injurious is it to seek no higher good in your intellectual pursuits than what is confined to earth and bounded (1) by time. We say unphilosophical, because it is contrary to the high intention of heaven — to the utterances of conscience, and to all the analogies of nature.

Man is a religious being. The religious element is found within him wherever he may roam (2) or rest. Every shore bears the impress of his bended knee (3); and from the shady wood and silent mountain there ascends to heaven the smoke of incense and the flame of sacrifice. He cannot rid himself (4) of the belief that there is some spirit presiding over his destiny, taking cognizance of his acts, and which will ultimately render to him according to his deserts (5).

The fears and hopes, too, which alternately rise within his breast and agitate his soul, when about to cross the threshold (6) of time, speak with solemn intonations of a retributive world — of a judgment to come.

(1) Limitato. — (2) Ramingare, vagare. — (3) Ginocchio. — (4) Disfarsi, spogliarsi. — (5) See a most admirable work on this subject, entitled, « The Crisis of Being, » by the Rev. D. Thomas. — (6) Soglia.

To treat with a flippant air such truths is thought, by not a few, to be a sign of a freethinking and manly spirit, as if implicit faith in such verities was characteristic only of a weak and sentimental mind. But there are moments even with such — moments suited to reflection by the gloom (1) which some grave event has spread over the sunny scenes of life, when they think and feel otherwise: and this more fearfully is the case when the goal (2) of life is reached — when its flame flickers in its socket. Why this, but for sin, and the thought of

« — that undiscover'd country, from whose bourne (3),
No traveller returns? »

Men may talk about their irresponsibility, in following their own desires, and in doing what seems good in their own eyes; but whatever may be their reasoning and thinking, they suffer more or less, even in the present life, for their evil (4) doings. If man were not responsible for his course of moral action, it were strange that any course which his inclinations might prompt him to adopt and pursue, should entail on him any amount of suffering. But such is the case. There is such a thing as retribution, though partial, going on in « the world that now is; » and sometimes fearful is the vengeance which overtakes and crushes (5) the transgressor. You may not *quite* live as you please. The pains and

(1) Il tetro, il cupo; l'oscurità, la tristezza. — (2) Meta. — 3) Confine, limite. — (4) Mali. — (5) Raggiunge e schiaccia.

penalties may almost be accurately specified, which will result from certain lines (1) of conduct; and when this is seen taking place, as it is at times among communities and nations, the thoughts of most hearts, if embodied (2) in words, would be, « Verily, there is a God who judgeth in the earth. »

Beware then of imbibing a sceptical spirit — of embracing infidel principles. Some who would be ashamed openly to avow (3) themselves as the advocates of such, are yet found lingering on its deceitful paths, and cherishing its darkening views. It is not surprising that such should not like to be recognised as belonging to this class, if they have but acted out (4) their sceptical principles; for where are the men to be found who have been made better by the teachings (5) of infidelity — who have been rendered models of universal imitation and blessings to their species?

History bears its fearful testimony to the social and moral degradation which the writings antagonistic to revealed religion have effected.

A celebrated writer, in speaking on this, in reference to the reign of terror during the French Revolution, says, « Have not the barbarities which have stained (6) the revolution in that unhappy country, been justly chargeable on the prevalence of Atheism? Let those who

(1) Maniere, generi, specie. — (2) Incorporati, incarnati, rivestiti. — (3) Dichiararsi. — (4) Operato secondo. — (5) Ammaestramento. — (6) Macchiato.

doubt this recollect, that the men who, by their activity and talents, prepared the minds of the people for that great change, — Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderôt, Rousseau, and others, — were avowed enemies of revelation: that in all their writings the diffusion of scepticism and revolutionary principles went hand in hand. The reign of *Atheism* was avowedly and expressly the reign of *terror*. In the full madness of their career — in the highest climax of their horrors, they shut up the temple of God — abolished his worship — and proclaimed death to be an eternal sleep. » This is only one of a thousand instances (1) which might be named in support of the statements we have made. Such is the tendency of principles opposed to revealed religion; nor can it be strange that results so formidable and destructive should be produced by them.

Man is born with the tendencies to evil, and this, alas! is too painfully manifested as he advances from infancy to manhood. But not only has he the tendency to evil, but he does the evil. Wherever he exists he is found, but with few exceptions, living according to the desires of the flesh. Injustice and oppression, cruelty and bloodshed, is almost the burden (2) of universal history; and all the systems of morals and philosophy which have emanated from human wisdom, have been utterly inefficient to counteract the evil tendencies of his

(1) Esempi. — (2) Soggetto.

nature, to controul his passions, or regulate the workings of his heart.

Greece and Rome had their famed moralists and wise men, who, in their lauded schools, gave forth their lectures on justice and liberty, virtue and happiness; but the moral features of society were unaltered — the tide (1) of evil rolled on with accelerated flow and accumulated force, till it sapped the foundations of social order and national prosperity, and they fell to rise no more.

It is not difficult to discover why so many of our young men have a sympathy with infidel views, when we consider that they can be entertained and yet no curb (2) be put upon the indulgence of their passions— no check be given to their evil inclinations. They have only to look within, and they will find this to be the *secret* of their being numbered in the ranks of scepticism. They dislike (3) the religion of the Bible, or pretend to disbelieve its credentials. With better grace could they dislike and disbelieve, if it did not utter its voice against « the lust of the flesh—the lust of the eye and the pride of life. »

We have said that man must have a religion; and what religion can he have suited (4) *to his moral nature and condition but Christianity?*

(1) Piena, marea, diluvio. — (2) Freno. — (3) Disamano, odiano. — (4) Adattato.

What religion has such sanctions, and is supported with such evidence—which so appeals to his understanding and conscience—which so enables him to develope his whole nature as to make life all-important and valuable, as that propounded by Him, « who spake as never man spake? » and who

——— « Sixteen hundred years ago
Was nailed for our advantage to the bitter cross? »

Nothing purer, nothing nobler than this ever dawned (1) on the human mind; and since the Great Teacher of Christianity appeared in our world, society has made an onward progress—the scope of man's thinking has been enlarged, and the social and benevolent feelings of his heart refined and expanded. The religious systems of antiquity dazzled and bewildered for a time, and then vanished and left man unpurified; but *this*, like the morning light, gradually brightening, and spreading over the world, assures us of the perfect day.

It is only natural that it should do this, for It is a system of truth pre-eminently suited to the moral wants and necessities of human nature. Christianity, by its simple majesty—by its reasonableness, and by its wonderful (2) adaptedness to man in every variety of state and character, must stand its ground, and fight its way in spite of all contending forces. What is the grand duty, involving all others, it enjoins?—love to God and

(1) Spuntò brillò. — (2) Meraviglioso.

You may perhaps entertain the idea that this book commends itself more to the unphilosophical, and is lauded chiefly by the religious enthusiast, forgetting that it has attracted to itself the noblest spirits of our race — the master-intellects of our world. Its evidences have engaged the labours of a Locke — its prophecies have called forth the mental energies of a Newton — its sublime poetical conceptions have charmed the imagination of a Milton, and even a Shakspeare has done homage at its page.

We repeat, too, that the Bible is *the* book for every man — for every man has it (in *embryo*) within him. It is but a fuller re-publication (with additions, we grant), of moral laws and sentiments which have been engraven on the heart by Him who fashioned man, and who made him at the first in his own moral image; and it is the great means designed to give to man's thoughts and affections their right direction — to assist him in the true development of his nature, and to bring the whole moral machinery of his being to act in harmony with universal law. Such is the Bible, and as such it is surely worthy of your study. Think not to elevate your character, nor to obtain a position in society influential for good and dignified by respect, if you designedly turn away from the thoughtful perusal of its pages. The constitution of your being — your relationship to God and man, and the world in which you live,

all demand that you give heed (1) to its instructions. You have life given to you for high purposes. Your probationary sojourn on earth is for a great end. Heaven bids you be good and do good, and to accomplish this requires all your energy, watchfulness (2), and caution. The day, too, in which you live is rampant (3) with error and evil in a thousand insinuating forms, and solicits you to become its votary even under the garb of religion. There never was a period in which it was more important to have settled (4) principles in religion, to have the soul fortified by truth, and the mind enlightened (5) by knowledge, than the present. The signs of the times are ominous. There is going on around us a mighty conflict between truth and error — might and right. The powers of darkness (6) and thrones of despotism are being shaken (7), while science and art, the changes of dynasties, and convulsions of nations, are all urging forward (8) the universal and triumphant reign of righteousness and peace. Let it be your aim to act your part worthily with all who are endeavouring to raise (9) the moral and intellectual condition of man.

Are there not reasons, then, all powerful, why you should avail yourself of every opportunity for your own mental and moral improvement? why, amid (10) the du-

(1) Attenzione, cura, guardia. — (2) Vigilanza. — (3) Rampante, rigurgitante. — (4) Fissi, fermi, sodi, stabiliti. — (5) Illuminato. — (6) Tenebre, buio, Ignoranza. — (7) Scosse, sconquassate. — (8) Spingono avanti, accelerano. — (9) Innalzare. — (10) In mezzo a.

ties of your secular callings, you should seek the enlargement of the mind and the rectification of the heart? Neglect it you may, but not without a loss, for which nothing can compensate. You are a progressive being; stationary you cannot remain; you must either advance on the upward road of virtue and of wisdom; or be hurried (1) down the steep (2) of sin and folly. It is for you to determine what shall be the moral features of your character. It is for you to anticipate the kind of fruit you shall reap by seeing to it, — what is the kind of seed you are sowing now?

If, then, real self-improvement be to expand and elevate the mind, to enlarge your ideas, to purify your affections, to ennoble your desires, to capacitate you for the contemplation of what is great and good, to excite the benevolence of your nature, and fit you to accomplish the great purposes of your creation — if this be self-culture, awake then to its importance. Set your heart to the work; with high expectations pursue it, and pursue it like one conscious of the worth, dignity, and immortality of his being.

(1) Strascinato, precipitato. — (2) Declivio, precipizio.

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« Non vi è nè in Italia, nè in Francia, nè in Germania, e neppure in Inghilterra, una Raccolta di Squarci Scelti della stessa mole che possa stare in confronto con questa; nè conosciamo noi alcun altro libro di 838 pagine, che sia nello stesso tempo tanto istruttivo e tanto dilettevole. » — Il Furetto.

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